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1. (twice amended) A method for identifying a compound that modulates signal transduction in taste cells, the method comprising the steps of:

(i) contacting a cell which expresses a taste cell specific G-protein alpha subunit polypeptide and a taste cell specific G protein coupled receptor with the compound, the G-protein alpha subunit polypeptide comprising greater than 70% amino acid sequence identity to a polypeptide having a sequence of SEQ ID NO:2; and

(ii) determining a functional effect of the compound upon the cell expressing the taste cell specific G-protein alpha subunit polypeptide and the taste cell specific G protein coupled receptor, thereby identifying a compound that modulates signal transduction in taste cells.

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6. (once amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the functional effect is determined by measuring increased or decreased binding of radiolabeled GTP to the G-protein alpha subunit polypeptide or to a G protein comprising the G-protein alpha subunit polypeptide.

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 6-8 are pending in the application and have been examined. The rejections are addressed below in the order raised by the Examiner. Appendix A provides the "Version with Markings to Show Changes Made." All pending claims are provided in Appendix B for the Examiner's convenience.

Objection to the specification

The specification was objected to for referencing two patent applications, and an updated status was requested. The specification has been amended to update the status of the applications (one pending, one issued). Applicants respectfully request that the objection be withdrawn.